AMAR CHITRA KATHA

KACHA AND DEVAYANI

STAR-CROSSED LOVERS

Vol 661 |

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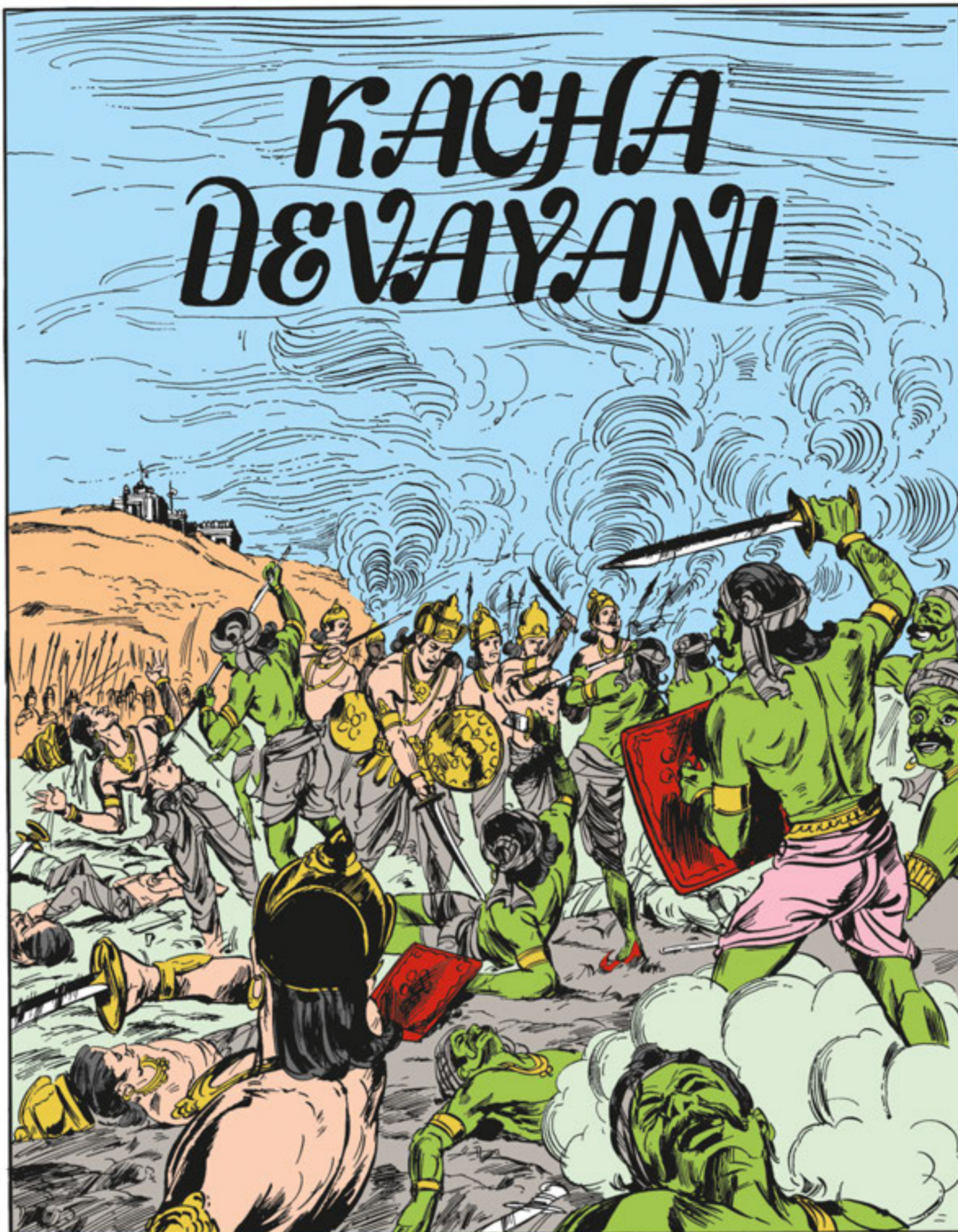
Illustrations
Souren Roy

Editor
Anant Pai

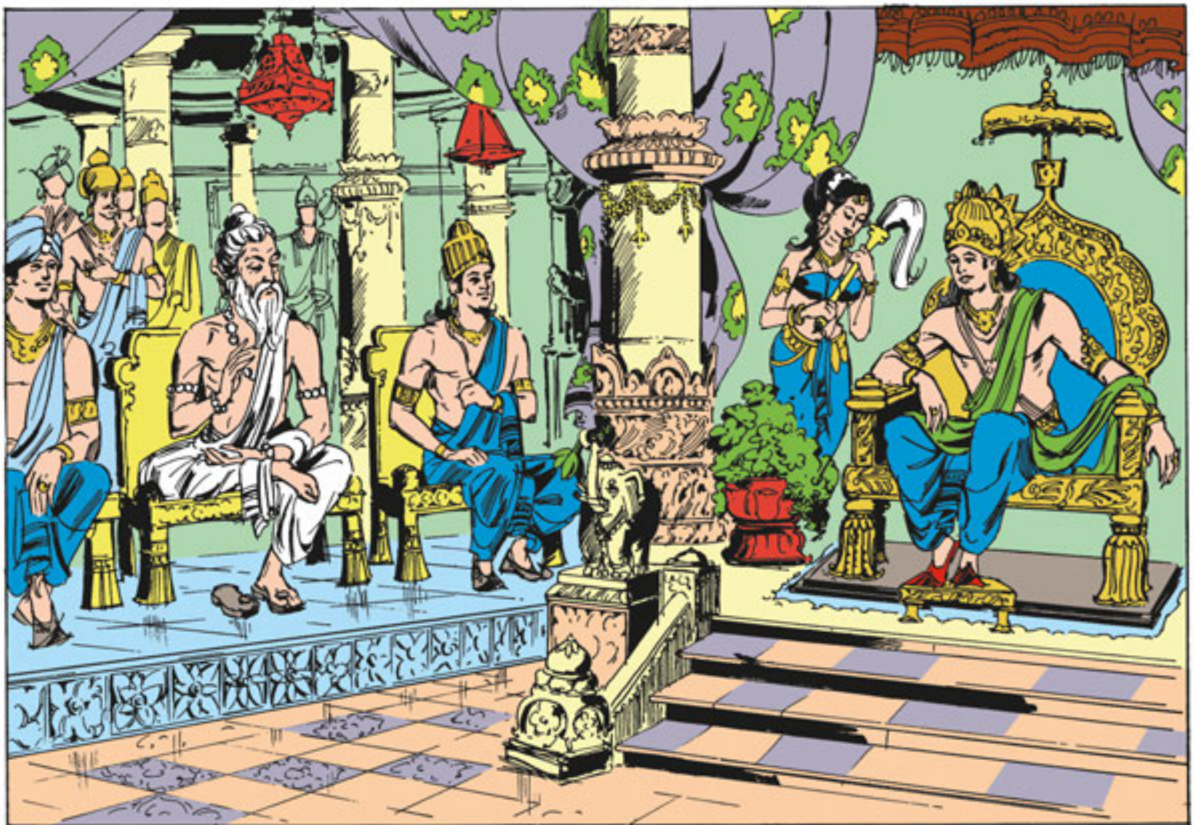
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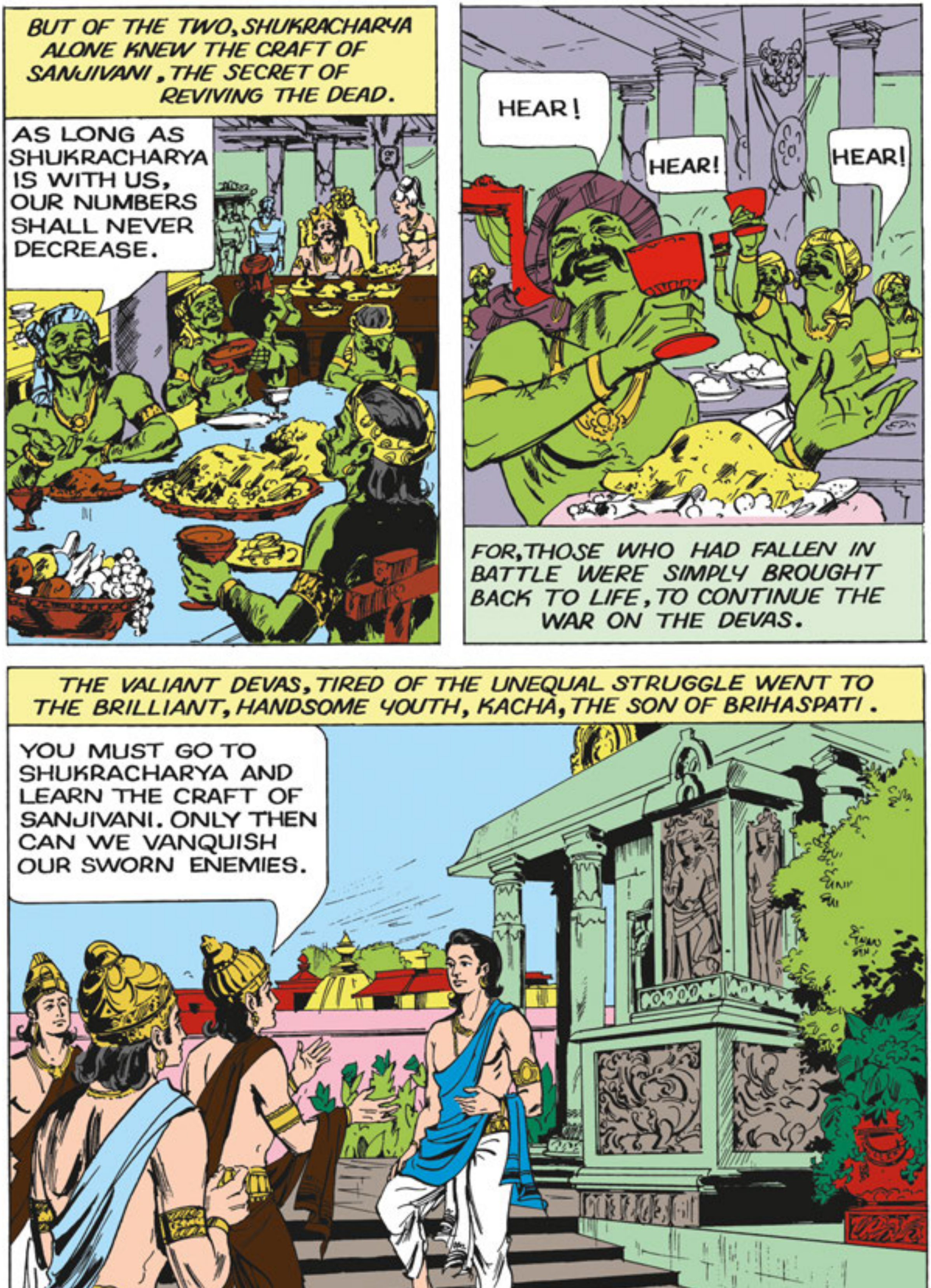
IN THE DAYS OF YORE, THE DEVAS AND THE ASURAS WERE EVER STRUGGLING FOR THE LORDSHIP OF THE THREE WORLDS.

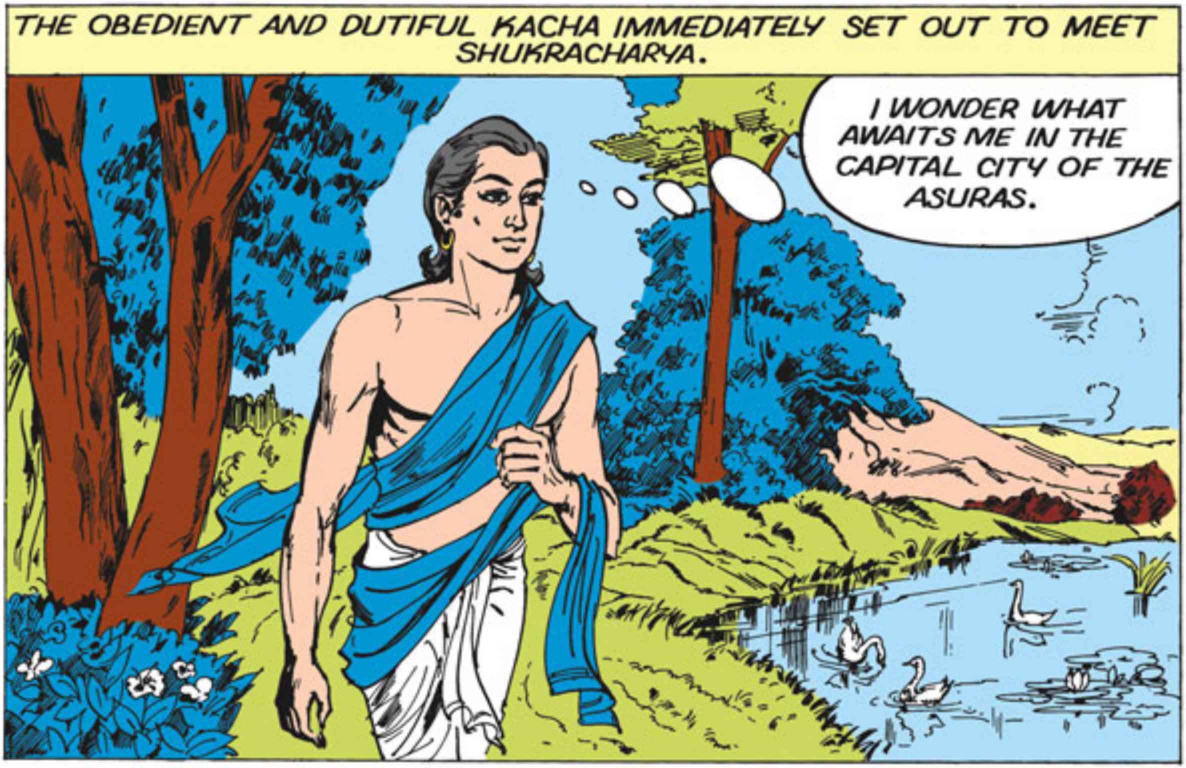


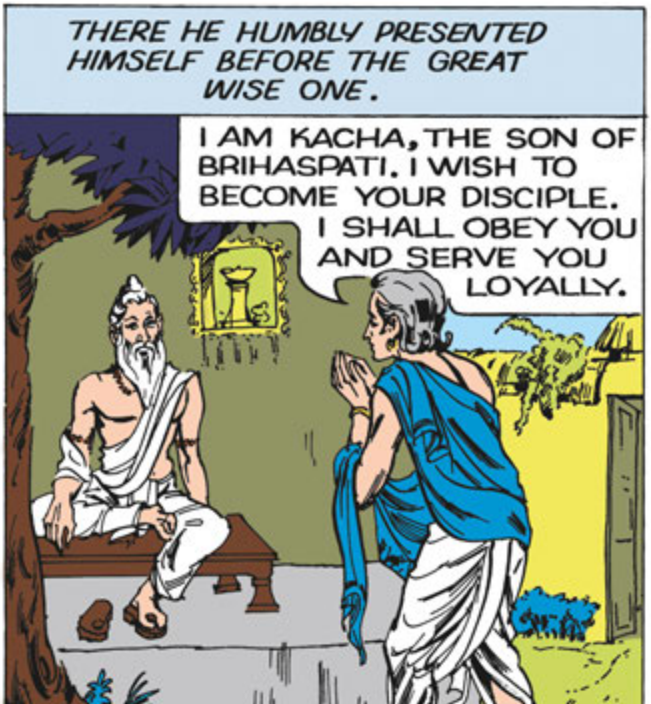
BOTH HAD WISE MEN TO GUIDE THEM. BRIHASPATI, THE SON OF SAGE ANGIRAS, LIVED IN THE ABODE OF INDRA, KING OF THE DEVAS.

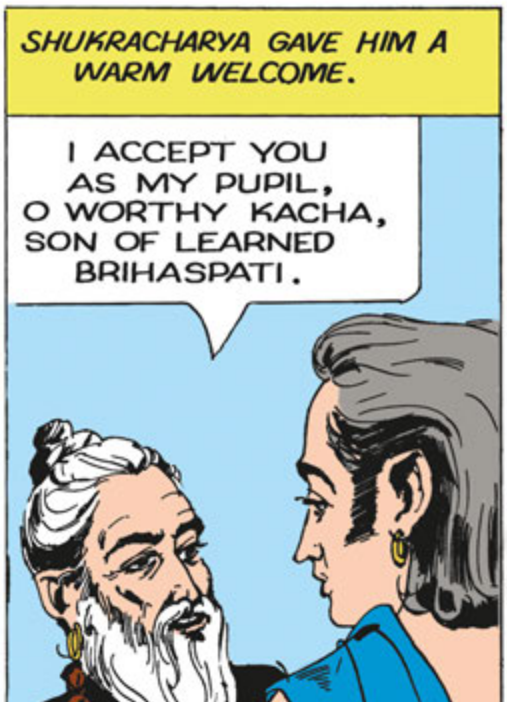


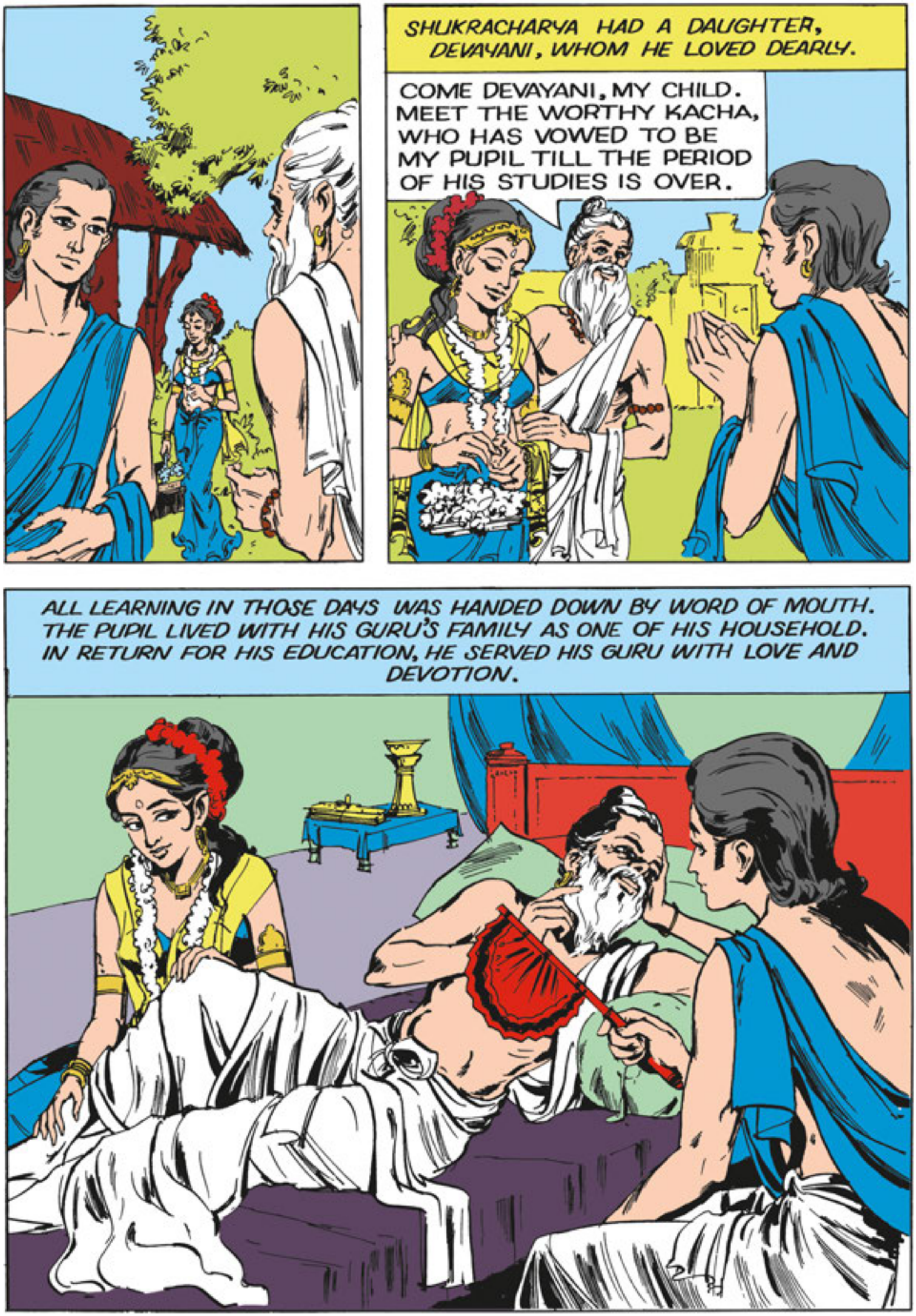
AND SHUKRACHARYA THE FAVOURITE PUPIL OF SAGE ANGIRAS, LIVED IN THE CAPITAL CITY OF THE ASURA KING, VRISHAPARVA.

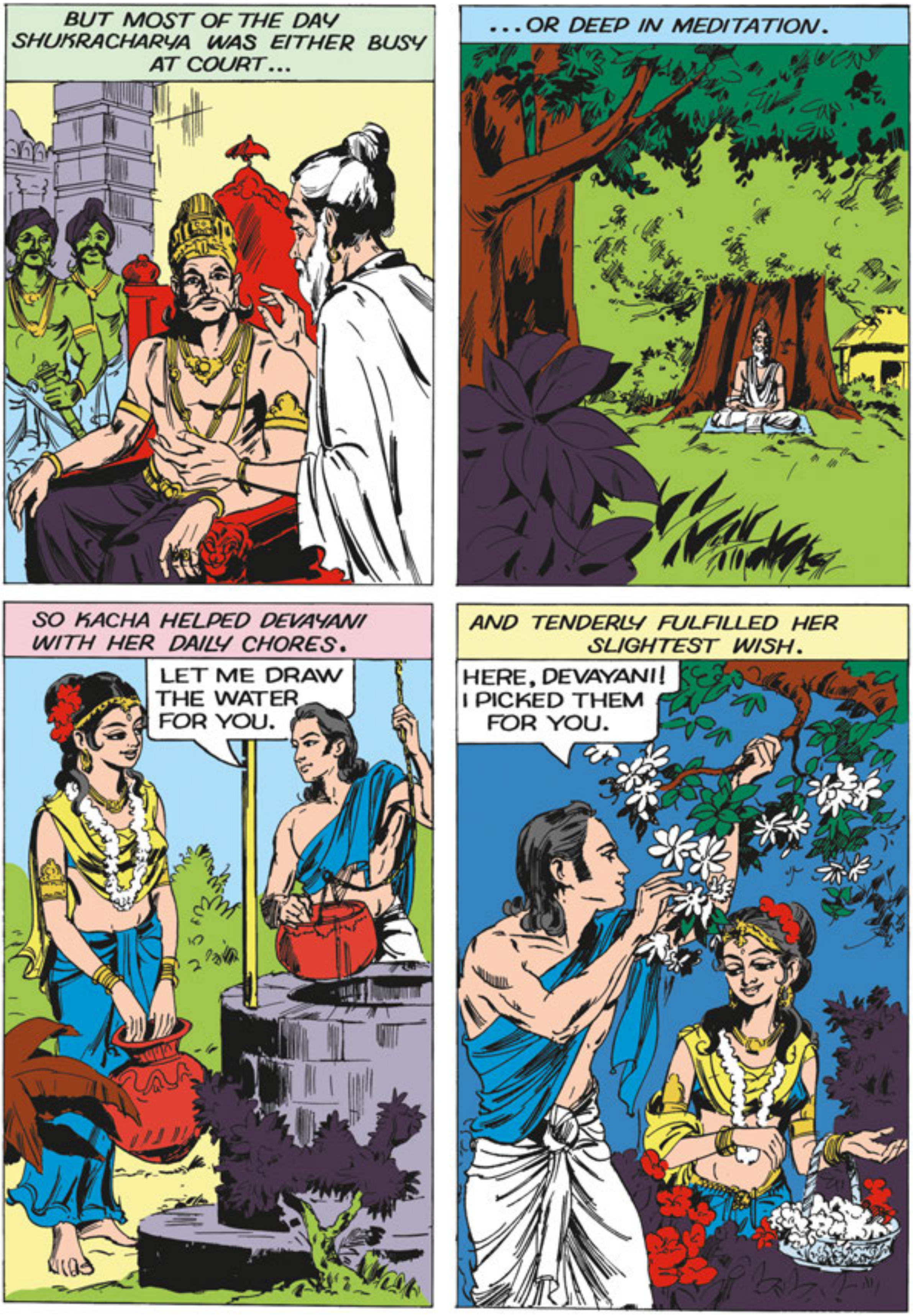

BUT OF THE TWO, SHUKRACHARYA ALONE KNEW THE CRAFT OF SANJIVANI, THE SECRET OF REVIVING THE DEAD.
AS LONG AS SHUKRACHARYA IS WITH US, OUR NUMBERS SHALL NEVER DECREASE.
HEAR!
HEAR!
HEAR!
FOR, THOSE WHO HAD FALLEN IN BATTLE WERE SIMPLY BROUGHT BACK TO LIFE, TO CONTINUE THE WAR ON THE DEVAS.
THE VALIANT DEVAS, TIRED OF THE UNEQUAL STRUGGLE WENT TO THE BRILLIANT, HANDSOME YOUTH, KACHA, THE SON OF BRIHASPATI.
YOU MUST GO TO SHUKRACHARYA AND LEARN THE CRAFT OF SANJIVANI. ONLY THEN CAN WE VANQUISH OUR SWORN ENEMIES.

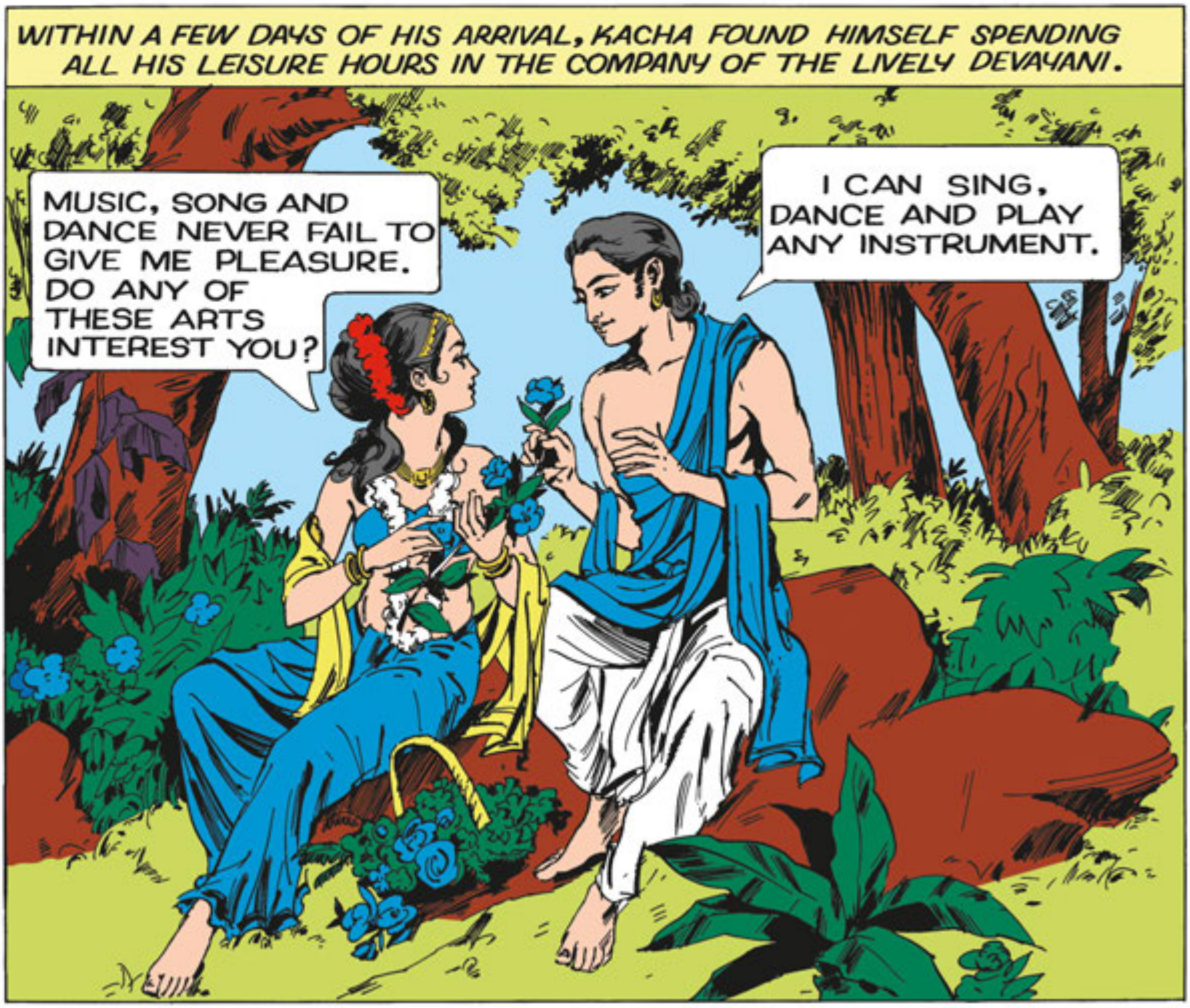

THE OBEDIENT AND DUTIFUL KACHA IMMEDIATELY SET OUT TO MEET SHUKRACHARYA.
I WONDER WHAT AWAITS ME IN THE CAPITAL CITY OF THE ASURAS.

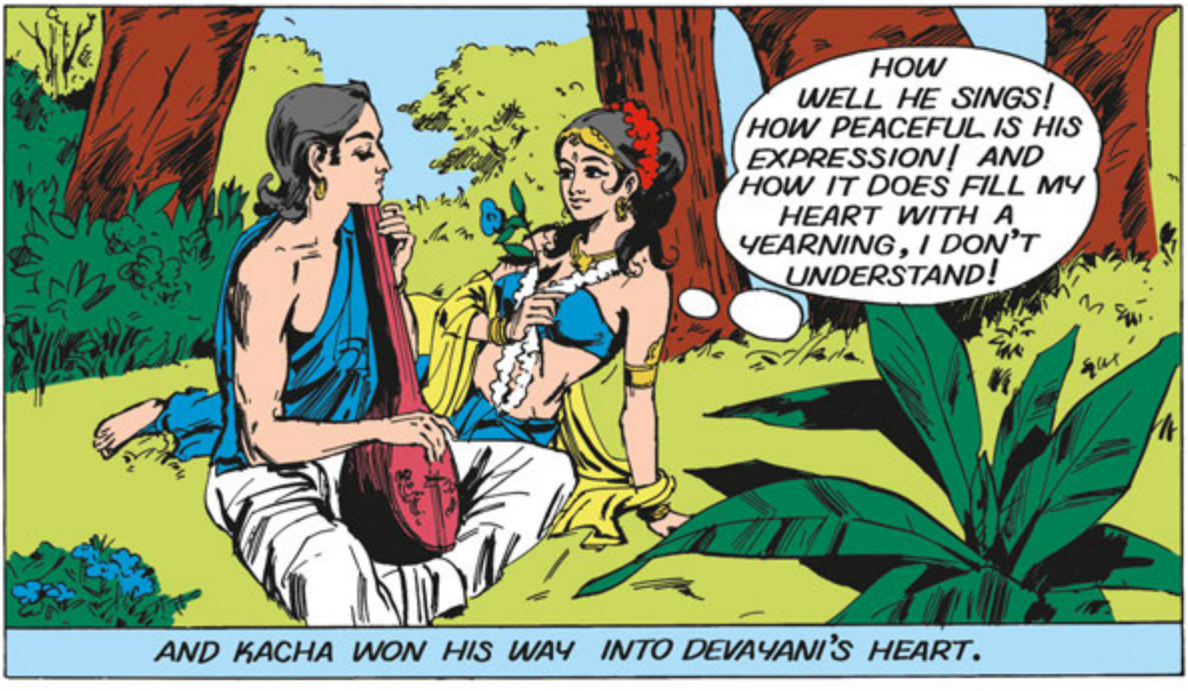

THERE HE HUMBLY PRESENTED HIMSELF BEFORE THE GREAT WISE ONE.
I AM KACHA, THE SON OF BRIHASPATI. I WISH TO BECOME YOUR DISCIPLE. I SHALL OBEY YOU AND SERVE YOU LOYALLY.


SHUKRACHARYA GAVE HIM A WARM WELCOME.
I ACCEPT YOU AS MY PUPIL, O WORTHY KACHA, SON OF LEARNED BRIHASPATI.


SHUKRACHARYA HAD A DAUGHTER, DEVAYANI, WHOM HE LOVED DEARLY.
COME DEVAYANI, MY CHILD. MEET THE WORTHY KACHA, WHO HAS VOWED TO BE MY PUPIL TILL THE PERIOD OF HIS STUDIES IS OVER.
ALL LEARNING IN THOSE DAYS WAS HANDED DOWN BY WORD OF MOUTH. THE PUPIL LIVED WITH HIS GURU'S FAMILY AS ONE OF HIS HOUSEHOLD. IN RETURN FOR HIS EDUCATION, HE SERVED HIS GURU WITH LOVE AND DEVOTION.


BUT MOST OF THE DAY SHUKRACHARYA WAS EITHER BUSY AT COURT...
...OR DEEP IN MEDITATION.
SO KACHA HELPED DEVAYANI WITH HER DAILY CHORES.
LET ME DRAW THE WATER FOR YOU.
AND TENDERLY FULFILLED HER SLIGHTEST WISH.
HERE, DEVAYANI! I PICKED THEM FOR YOU.


WITHIN A FEW DAYS OF HIS ARRIVAL, KACHA FOUND HIMSELF SPENDING ALL HIS LEISURE HOURS IN THE COMPANY OF THE LIVELY DEVAYANI.
MUSIC, SONG AND DANCE NEVER FAIL TO GIVE ME PLEASURE. DO ANY OF THESE ARTS INTEREST YOU?
I CAN SING, DANCE AND PLAY ANY INSTRUMENT.

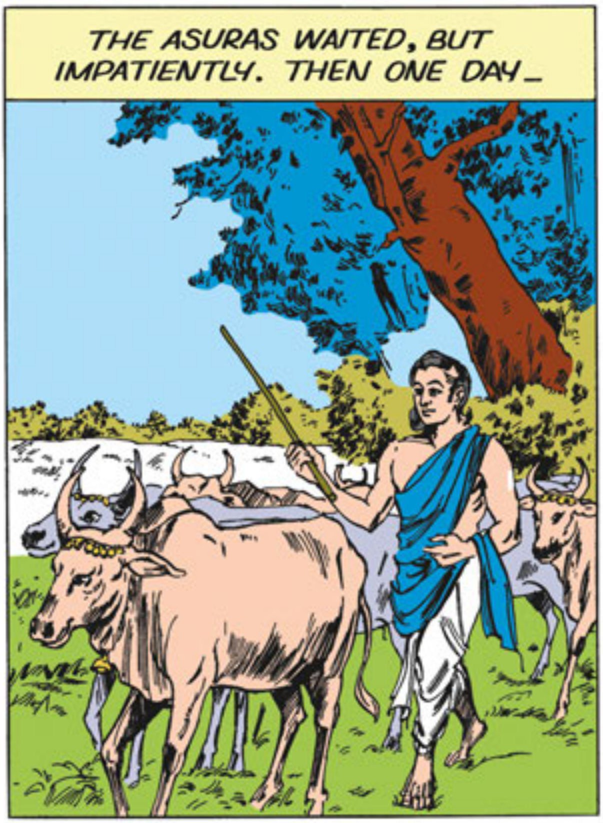

HOW WELL HE SINGS! HOW PEACEFUL IS HIS EXPRESSION! AND HOW IT DOES FILL MY HEART WITH A YEARNING, I DON'T UNDERSTAND!
AND KACHA WON HIS WAY INTO DEVAYANI'S HEART.


ONCE TO TEASE HER, KACHA HID HIMSELF AMONG THE TREES.
WHERE COULD HE BE ? HAS HE TIRED OF MY COMPANY ? HAVE I DONE ANYTHING TO OFFEND HIM?
BUT DEVAYANI COULD NOT EVEN PRETEND TO BE ANGRY FOR LONG.
COME, LET US GO TO OUR FAVOURITE BOWER.
IT IS NOT AS WARM IN THE LAND OF DEVAS AS IT IS HERE.


WHERE IS KACHA? IT IS TIME...
I SHALL CALL HIM. HE IS WITH THE CATTLE
AND SO KACHA LIVED AND LEARNED IN THE HOME OF HIS GURU.
BUT AS THE YEARS PASSED, THE ASURAS BECAME SUSPICIOUS OF KACHA.
IT IS STRANGE! WHY SHOULD THE SON OF THE LEARNED BRIHASPATI COME TO OUR CITY AND CHOOSE SHUKRA-CHARYA FOR HIS GURU?
I SENSE TREACHERY. THE ONLY KNOWLEDGE SHUKRACHARYA HAS, THAT KACHA'S FATHER HAS NOT, IS THE SECRET CRAFT OF SANJIVANI.


ALL THE ASURAS ROSE AS ONE ROARING ANGRILY.
DOWN WITH THE SLY ONE.
KACHA MUST DIE.
KACHA SHALL BE KILLED.


WAIT! PATIENCE! WE SHALL HAVE TO DO THIS IN SECRECY. A GURU WILL NOT LET HIS PUPIL BE SLAIN.


THE ASURAS WAITED, BUT IMPATIENTLY. THEN ONE DAY_


THE ASURAS FELL UPON HIM AND SLEW HIM.
THEY CUT HIM INTO PIECES.
AND FED HIS FLESH TO THEIR DOGS.
HA!
HA!
AS USUAL DEVAYANI WAITED FOR HIM.
IT IS LATE! THE CATTLE HAVE NOT RETURNED AND NEITHER HAS HE.


THERE THEY COME! BUT WHY DO THEY RETURN WITHOUT KACHA? A NAMELESS FEAR GRIPS ME.


IT IS LATE AND YOUR PRAYERS ARE OVER. THE CATTLE HAVE COME HOME WITHOUT KACHA. IF HE IS DEAD, I DO NOT WANT TO LIVE ANY MORE


DO NOT WEEP, MY CHILD. WILL NOT YOUR FATHER, WHO HAS REVIVED COUNTLESS ASURA WARRIORS, USE HIS SECRET FOR HIS OWN DAUGHTER'S HAPPINESS?


SHUKRACHARYA CLOSED HIS EYES AND LO!
KACHA STOOD BEFORE DEVAYANI.



WHERE DID YOU VANISH? WHY DID YOU TEASE ME SO?
THE ASURAS KILLED ME! I DO NOT KNOW HOW I CAME BACK TO LIFE BUT HERE I AM.
KACHA CONTINUED LIVING IN THE HOME OF HIS GURU. ONE DAY –
LONG AGO, WHILE WALKING DEEP IN THE FOREST WITH MY FATHER, I HAD SEEN SOME FLOWERS. THEIR PERFUME STILL LINGERS IN MY MEMORY. KACHA, WILL YOU BRING SOME FOR ME? THEY BLOOM ONLY IN THIS SEASON.
KACHA COULD HARDLY REFUSE THE ENCHANTING DEVAYANI SUCH A REQUEST.


SO HE WANDERED DEEP INTO THE FOREST IN SEARCH OF THE FLOWERS. THE ASURAS WERE WAITING FOR JUST SUCH AN OPPORTUNITY.
THEY WAYLAID HIM AND SLEW HIM.
THIS TIME THEY CARRIED HIS BODY TO A LONELY SPOT. THERE –
WE SHALL POUND HIS CARCASS INTO PASTE AND DISSOLVE IT IN THE WATERS OF THE OCEAN.


HOURS LATER AT SHUKRACHARYA'S HOME -
KACHA IS AWAY LONG ENOUGH TO COLLECT FLOWERS FOR TEN MAIDENS. I WONDER WHAT KEEPS HIM?
WHY SHOULD I WORRY? I HAVE ONLY TO TELL FATHER AND KACHA WITH MY FLOWERS WILL STAND BEFORE ME.
MEANWHILE-
I WONDER WHAT KEEPS KACHA. IT IS TIME FOR HIS STUDIES. AND HE IS PROMPT. FOR SOME REASON THE ASURAS WISH TO KILL MY DISCIPLE. I FEAR HE IS IN THEIR CLUTCHES ONCE AGAIN.
DEVAYANI APPROACHED SHUKRACHARYA AND HIS SUSPICIONS WERE CONFIRMED.
FATHER!
DO NOT BE UPSET, MY CHILD.
ONCE AGAIN HE USED HIS SECRET KNOWLEDGE TO RECALL KACHA.


I HAVE BAD NEWS FOR YOU! KACHA LIVES.
THE ASURAS WERE AT THEIR WIT'S END.
HOW CAN WE KILL KACHA IF SHUKRACHARYA KEEPS BRINGING HIM BACK TO LIFE?
AT LAST ONE OF THEM HAD AN IDEA.
THE NEXT EVENING WHEN KACHA WAS DRIVING THE CATTLE HOME AS USUAL–

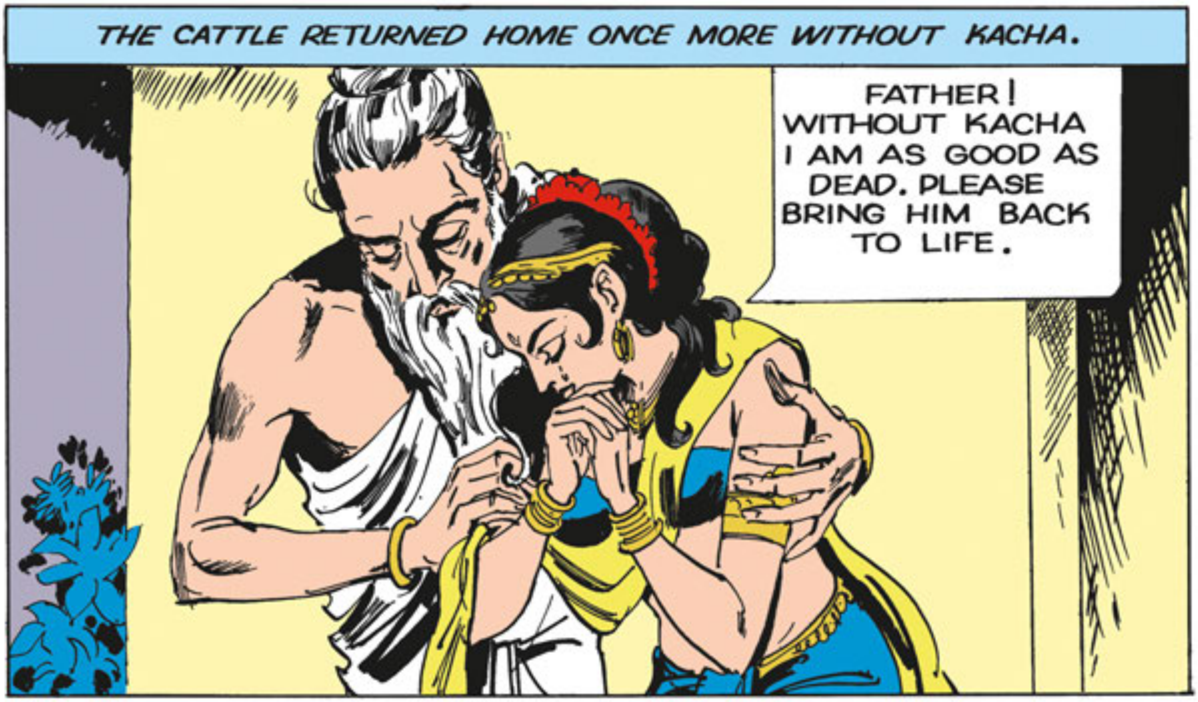

HIS BODY WAS CREMATED.

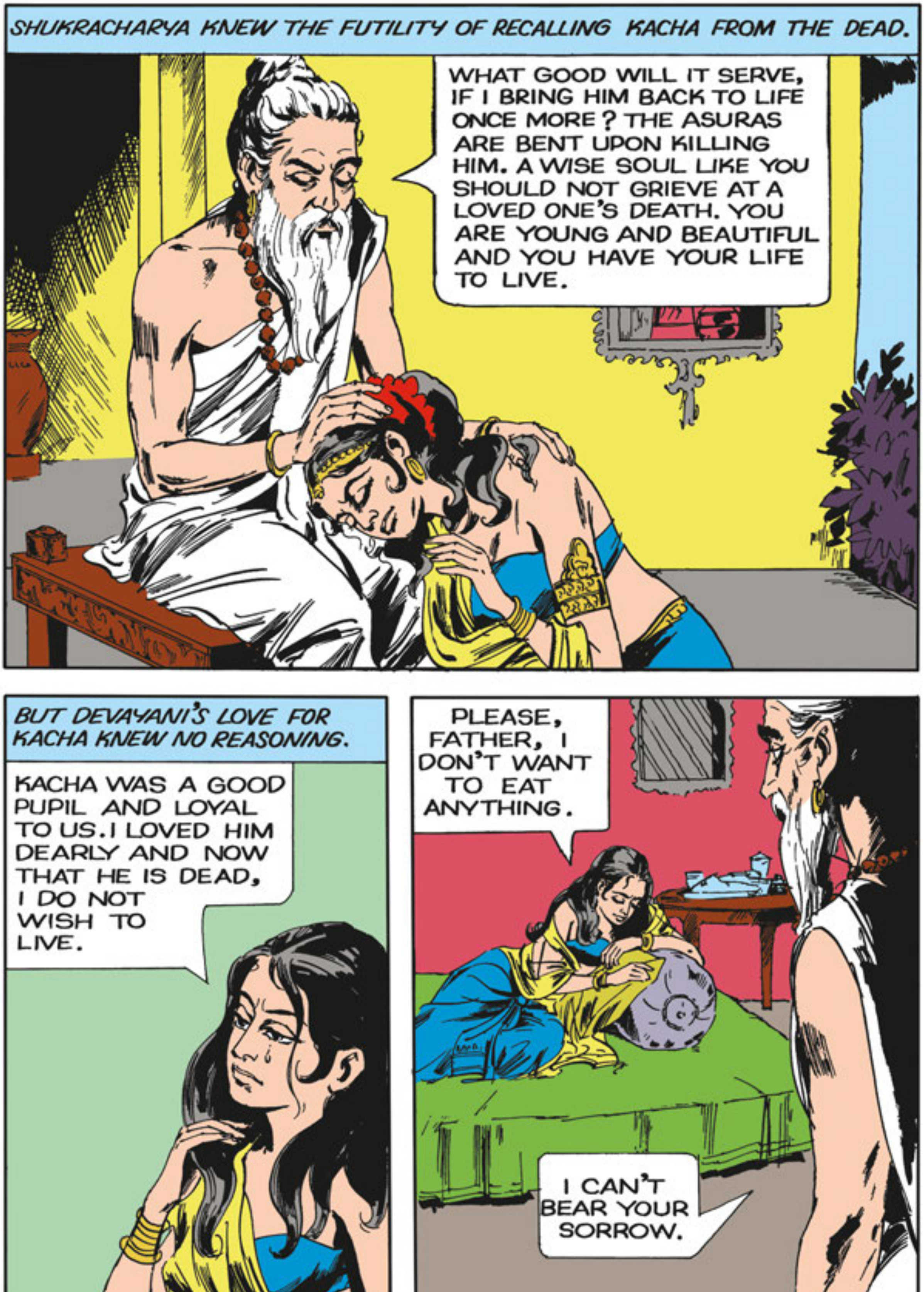

THE ASHES WERE CAREFULLY COLLECTED...

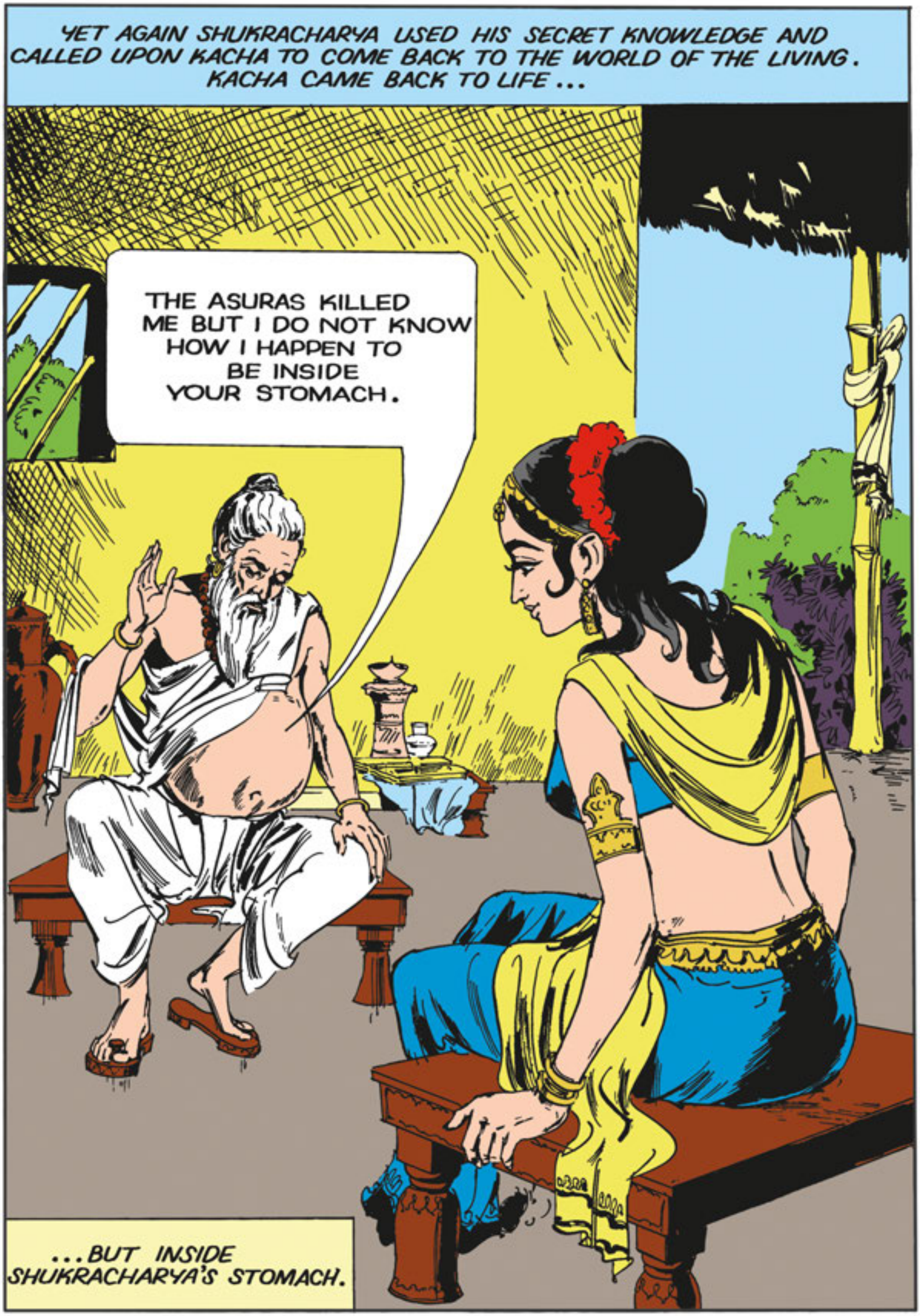

...AND MIXED INTO A GOBLET OF WINE.

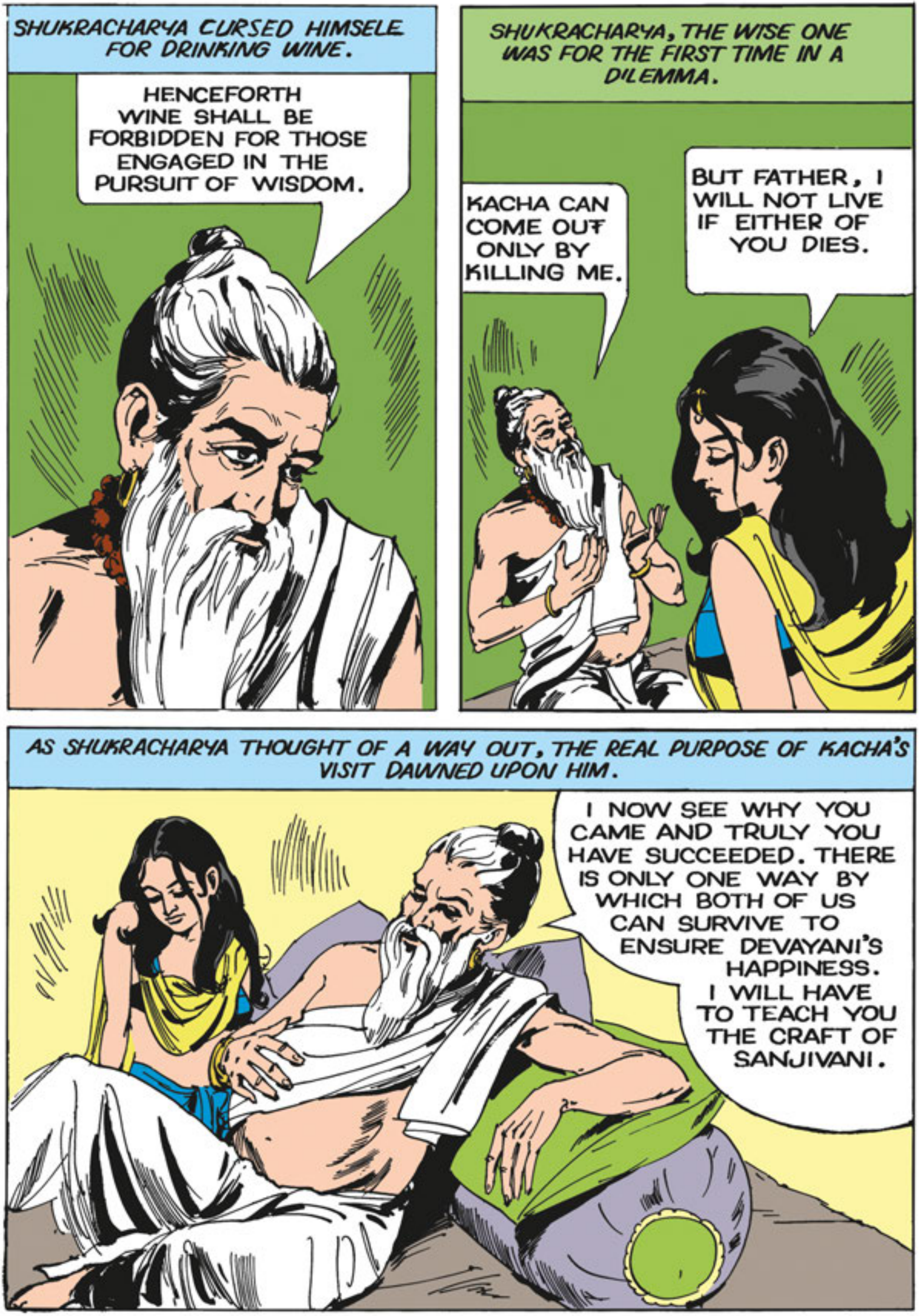

THE GREYING ASURA THEN TOOK THE GOBLET OF WINE TO SHUKRACHARYA.
O WISE ONE! WE BRING YOU THIS HUMBLE GIFT IN GRATITUDE FOR KEEPING OUR NUMBERS CONSTANT.
IF SHUKRACHARYA HAD A WEAKNESS IT WAS FOR WINE. HE EMPTIED THE CONTENTS OF THE GOBLET IN ONE GULP.
LONG LIVE THE ASURAS!

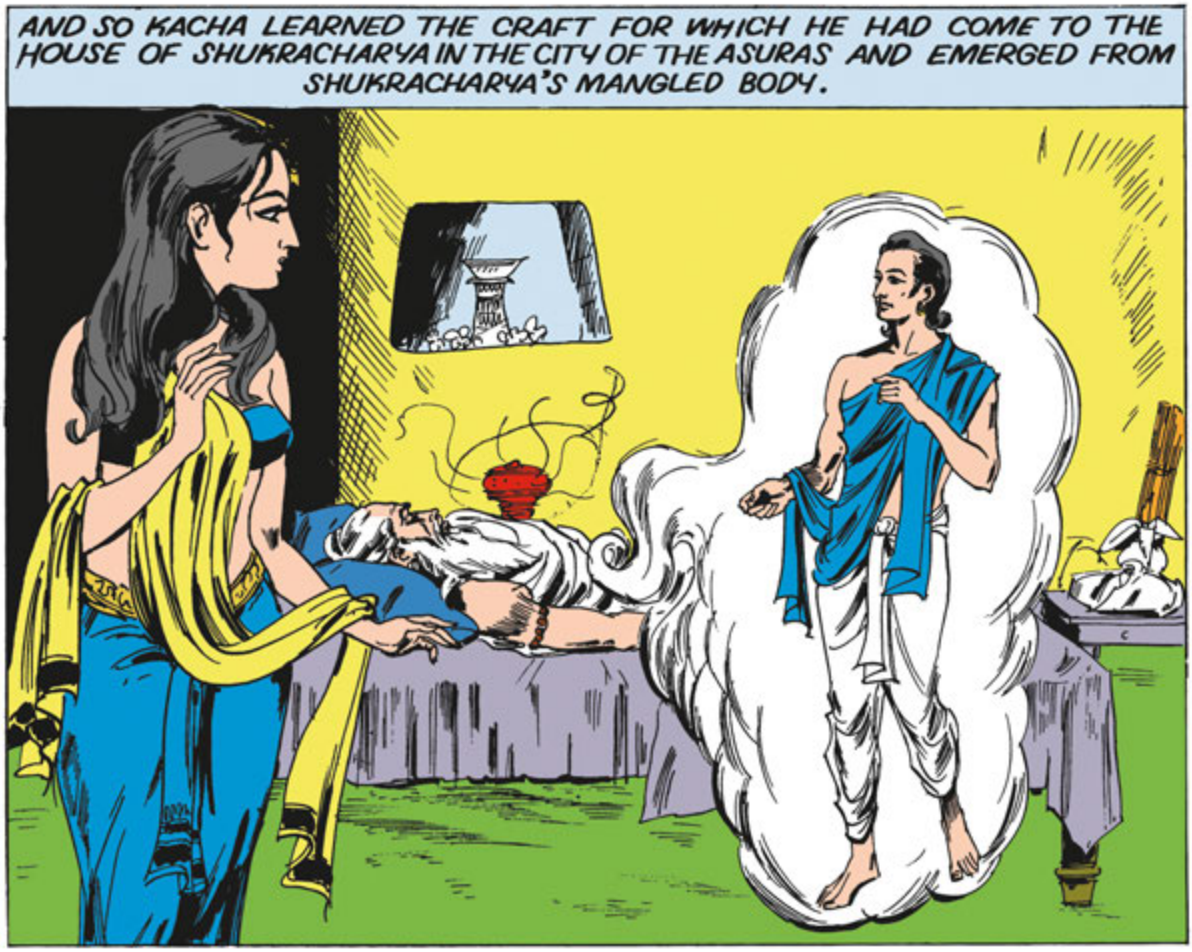

DEVAYANI WAITED IN VAIN FOR KACHA.
OH KACHA! HOW MANY MORE DEATHS WILL YOU HAVE TO DIE BEFORE THE ASURAS LEAVE YOU ALONE? WILL YOU EVER BE MINE?

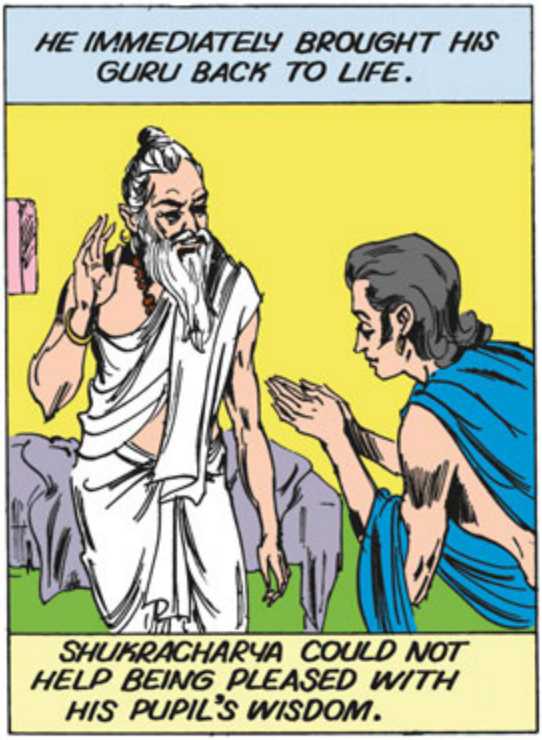

THE CATTLE RETURNED HOME ONCE MORE WITHOUT KACHA.
FATHER! WITHOUT KACHA I AM AS GOOD AS DEAD. PLEASE BRING HIM BACK TO LIFE.


SHUKRACHARYA KNEW THE FUTILITY OF RECALLING KACHA FROM THE DEAD.
WHAT GOOD WILL IT SERVE, IF I BRING HIM BACK TO LIFE ONCE MORE ? THE ASURAS ARE BENT UPON KILLING HIM. A WISE SOUL LIKE YOU SHOULD NOT GRIEVE AT A LOVED ONE'S DEATH. YOU ARE YOUNG AND BEAUTIFUL AND YOU HAVE YOUR LIFE TO LIVE.
BUT DEVAYANI'S LOVE FOR KACHA KNEW NO REASONING.
KACHA WAS A GOOD PUPIL AND LOYAL TO US. I LOVED HIM DEARLY AND NOW THAT HE IS DEAD, I DO NOT WISH TO LIVE.
PLEASE, FATHER, I DON'T WANT TO EAT ANYTHING.
I CAN'T BEAR YOUR SORROW.


YET AGAIN SHUKRACHARYA USED HIS SECRET KNOWLEDGE AND CALLED UPON KACHA TO COME BACK TO THE WORLD OF THE LIVING. KACHA CAME BACK TO LIFE ...
THE ASURAS KILLED ME BUT I DO NOT KNOW HOW I HAPPEN TO BE INSIDE YOUR STOMACH.
...BUT INSIDE SHUKRACHARYA'S STOMACH.


SHUKRACHARYA CURSED HIMSELE FOR DRINKING WINE.
HENCEFORTH WINE SHALL BE FORBIDDEN FOR THOSE ENGAGED IN THE PURSUIT OF WISDOM.
SHUKRACHARYA, THE WISE ONE WAS FOR THE FIRST TIME IN A DILEMMA.
KACHA CAN COME OUT ONLY BY KILLING ME.
BUT FATHER, I WILL NOT LIVE IF EITHER OF YOU DIES.
AS SHUKRACHARYA THOUGHT OF A WAY OUT, THE REAL PURPOSE OF KACHA'S VISIT DAWNED UPON HIM.
I NOW SEE WHY YOU CAME AND TRULY YOU HAVE SUCCEEDED. THERE IS ONLY ONE WAY BY WHICH BOTH OF US CAN SURVIVE TO ENSURE DEVAYANI'S HAPPINESS. I WILL HAVE TO TEACH YOU THE CRAFT OF SANJIVANI.

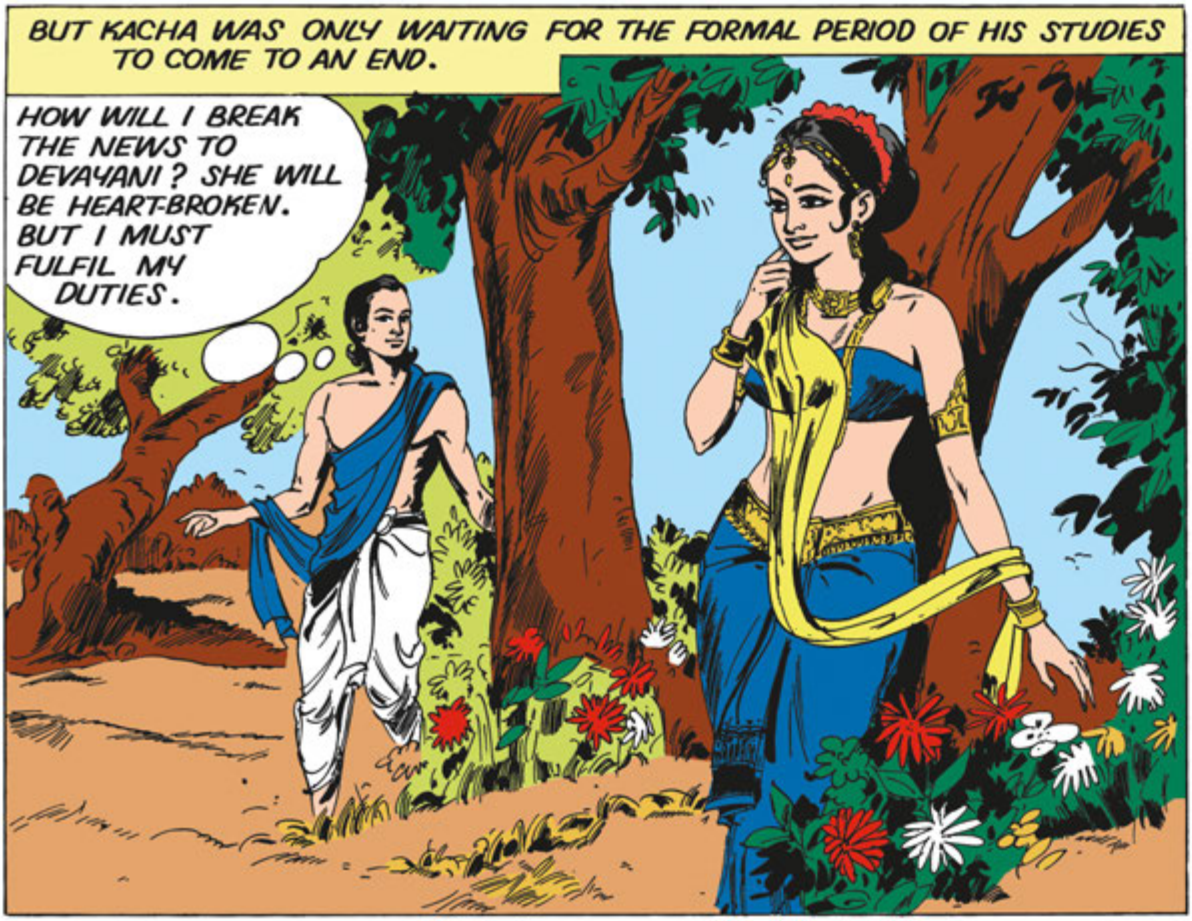

AND SO KACHA LEARNED THE CRAFT FOR WHICH HE HAD COME TO THE HOUSE OF SHUKRACHARYA IN THE CITY OF THE ASURAS AND EMERGED FROM SHUKRACHARYA'S MANGLED BODY.

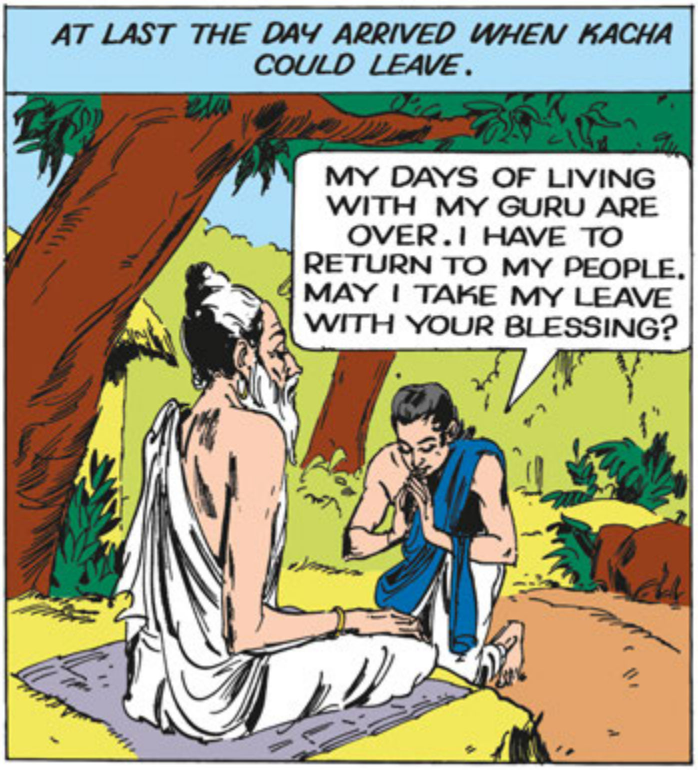

HE IMMEDIATELY BROUGHT HIS GURU BACK TO LIFE.
SHUKRACHARYA COULD NOT HELP BEING PLEASED WITH HIS PUPIL'S WISDOM.


SHUKRACHARYA THEN WENT TO SEE THE ASURAS.

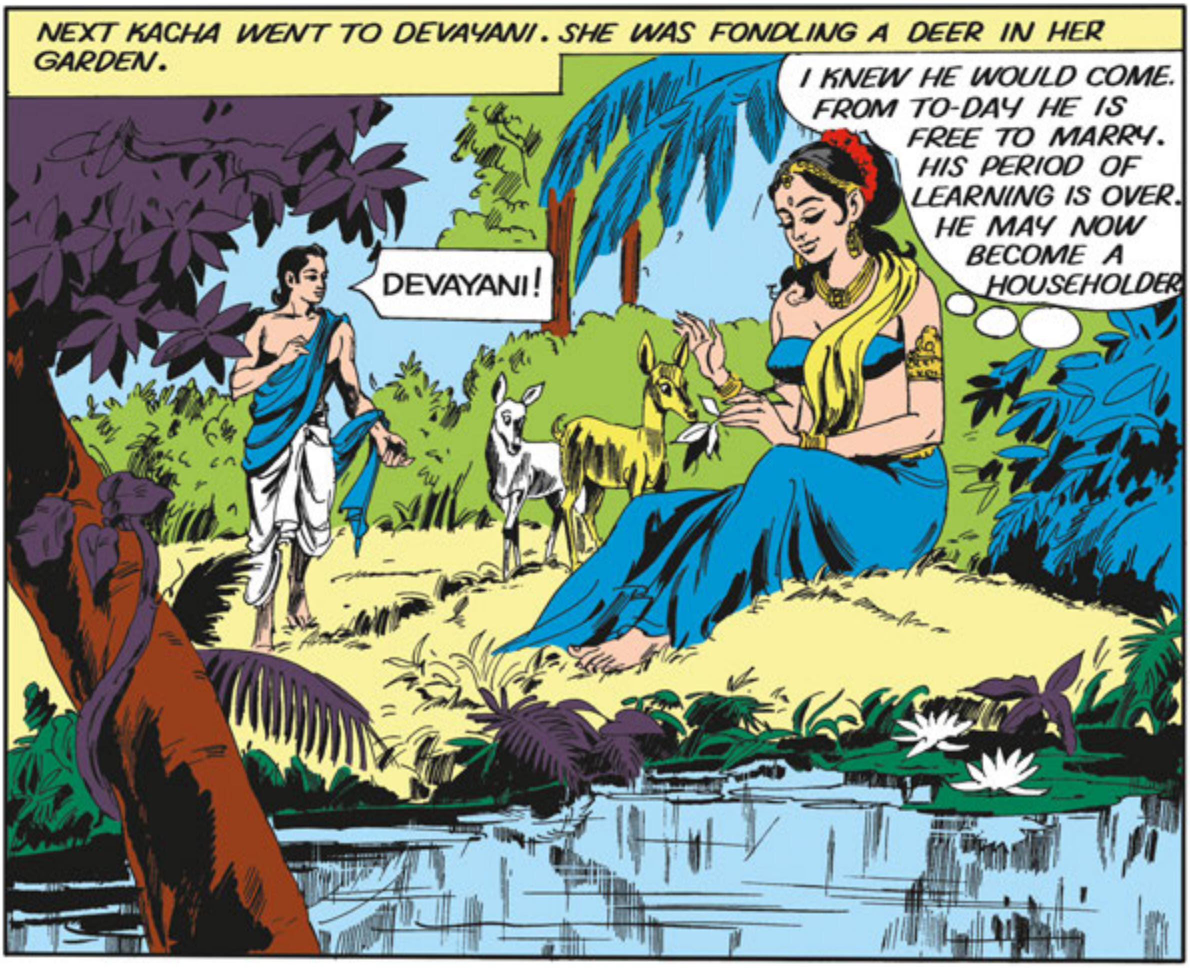

YOU FOOLS! KACHA NOW KNOWS MY SECRET CRAFT. YOU HELPED HIM LEARN IT.

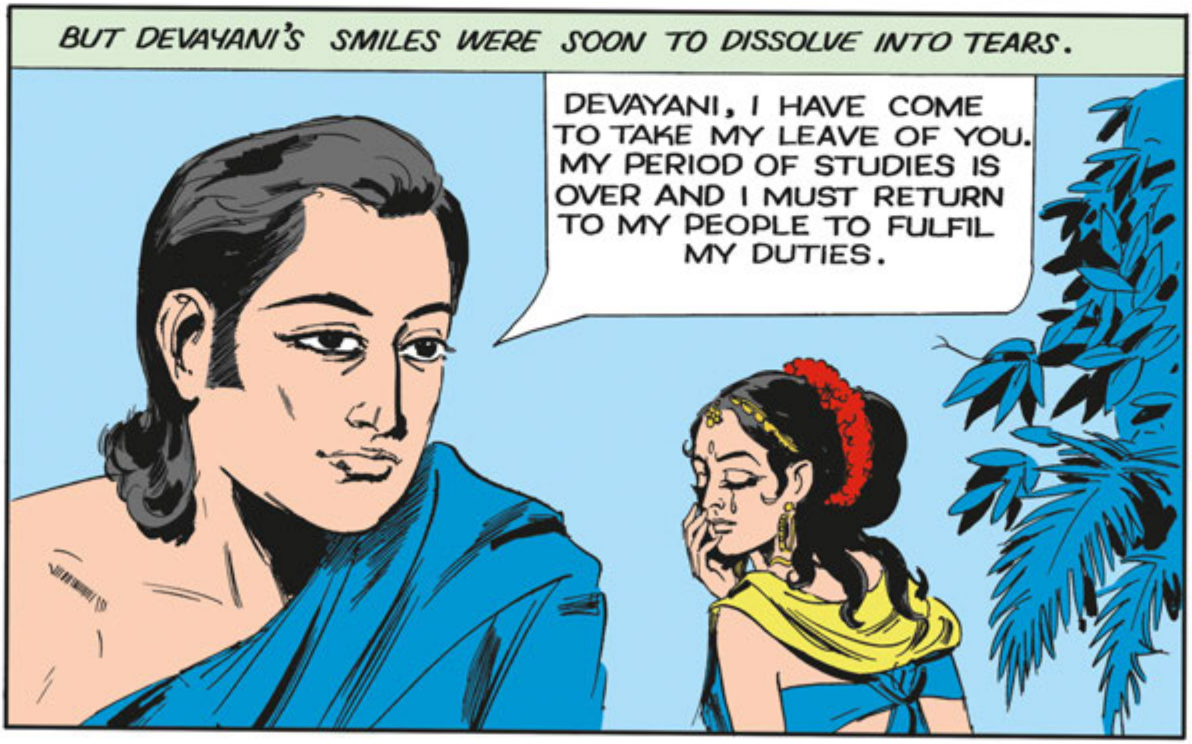

BUT REST ASSURED. HE WILL CONTINUE TO LIVE WITH ME FOR THE FAULTLESS DEVAYANI LOVES HIM.

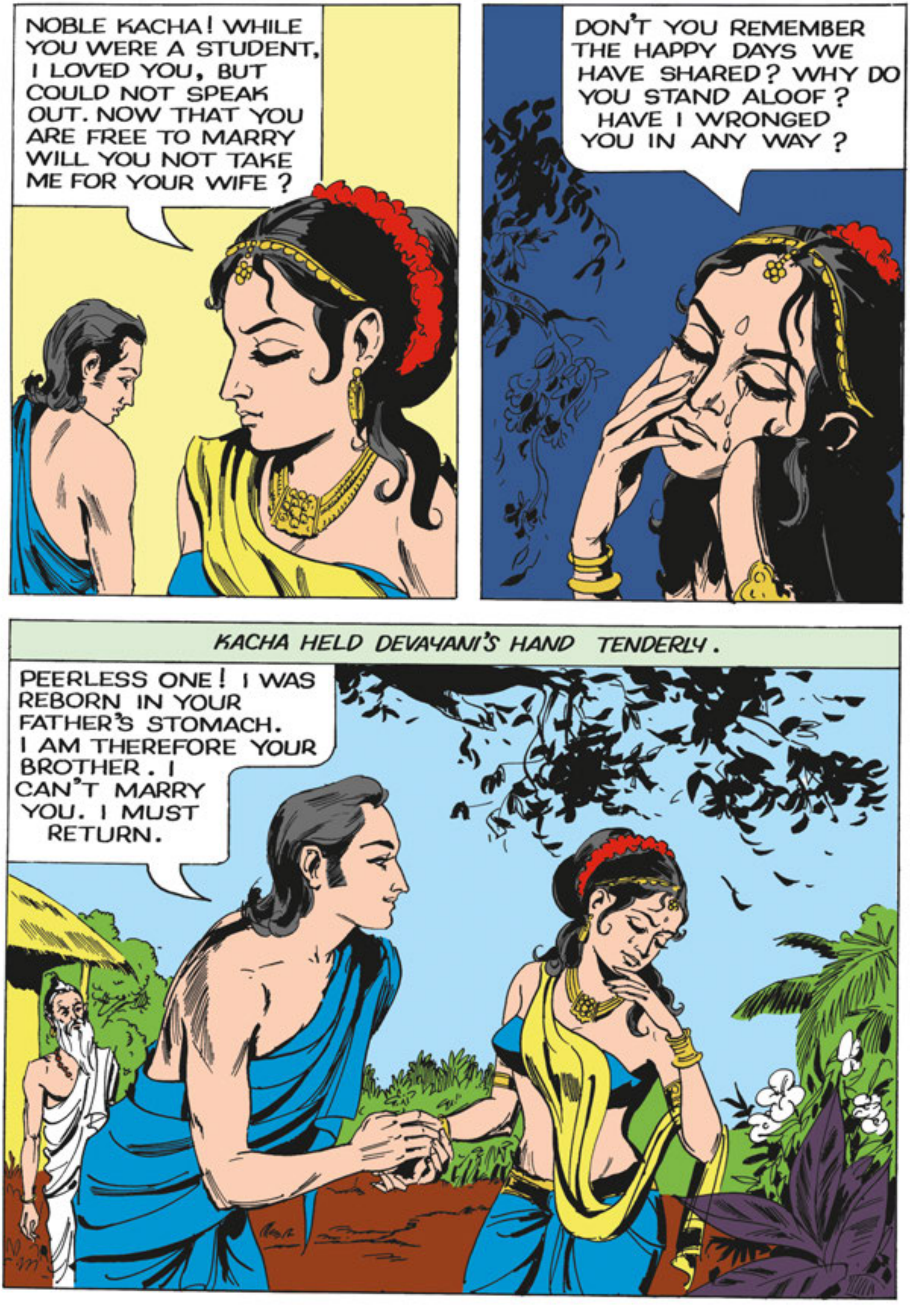

BUT KACHA WAS ONLY WAITING FOR THE FORMAL PERIOD OF HIS STUDIES TO COME TO AN END.
HOW WILL I BREAK THE NEWS TO DEVAYANI? SHE WILL BE HEART-BROKEN. BUT I MUST FULFIL MY DUTIES.

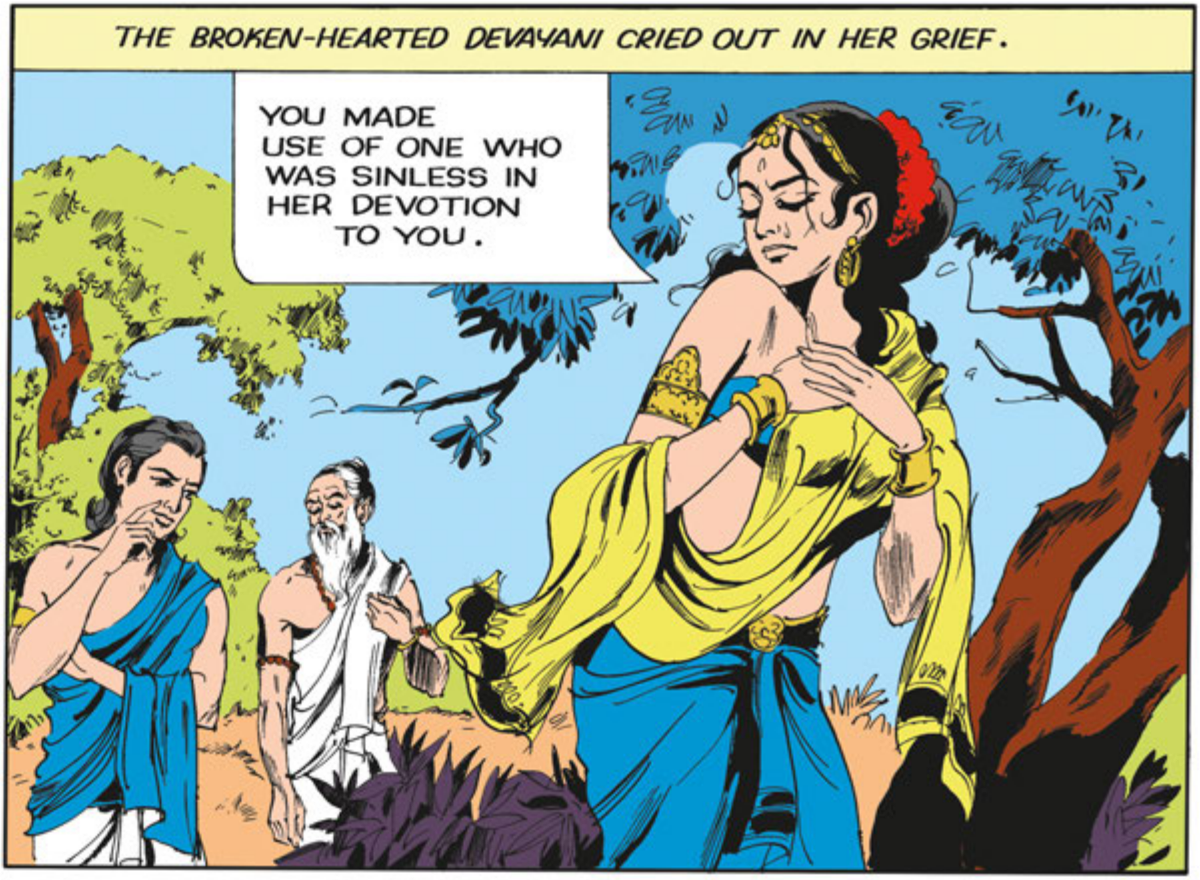

AT LAST THE DAY ARRIVED WHEN KACHA COULD LEAVE.
MY DAYS OF LIVING WITH MY GURU ARE OVER. I HAVE TO RETURN TO MY PEOPLE. MAY I TAKE MY LEAVE WITH YOUR BLESSING?

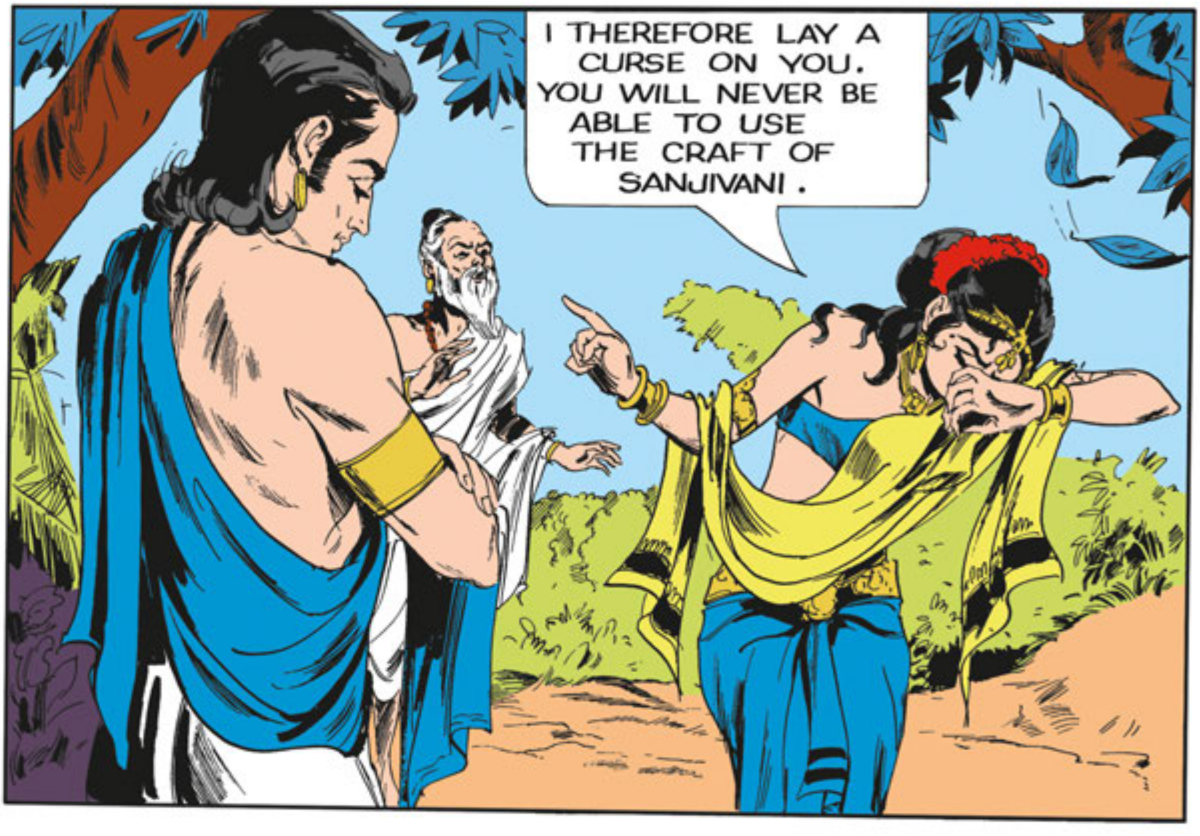

DOES DEVAYANI KNOW OF HIS DECISION? I WONDER!

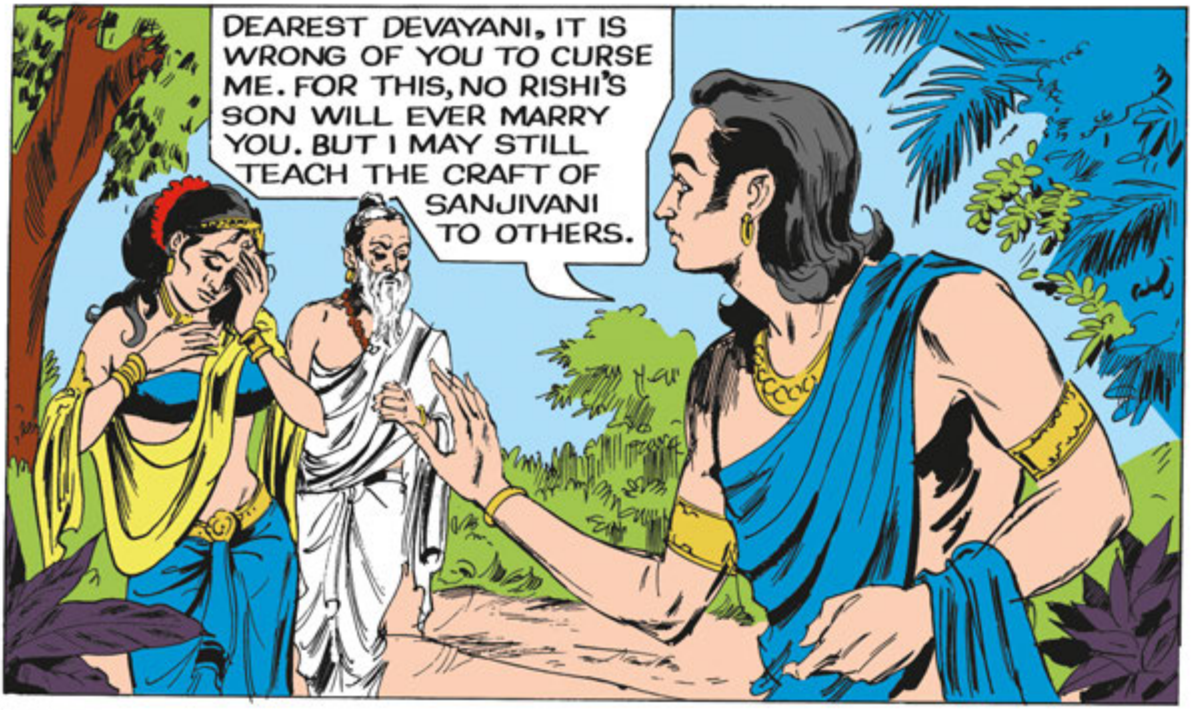

NEXT KACHA WENT TO DEVAYANI. SHE WAS FONDLING A DEER IN HER GARDEN.
DEVAYANI!
I KNEW HE WOULD COME. FROM TO-DAY HE IS FREE TO MARRY. HIS PERIOD OF LEARNING IS OVER. HE MAY NOW BECOME A HOUSEHOLDER


BUT DEVAYANI'S SMILES WERE SOON TO DISSOLVE INTO TEARS.
DEVAYANI, I HAVE COME TO TAKE MY LEAVE OF YOU. MY PERIOD OF STUDIES IS OVER AND I MUST RETURN TO MY PEOPLE TO FULFIL MY DUTIES.


NOBLE KACHA! WHILE YOU WERE A STUDENT, I LOVED YOU, BUT COULD NOT SPEAK OUT. NOW THAT YOU ARE FREE TO MARRY WILL YOU NOT TAKE ME FOR YOUR WIFE ?
DON'T YOU REMEMBER THE HAPPY DAYS WE HAVE SHARED? WHY DO YOU STAND ALOOF? HAVE I WRONGED YOU IN ANY WAY ?
KACHA HELD DEVAYANI'S HAND TENDERLY.
PEERLESS ONE! I WAS REBORN IN YOUR FATHER'S STOMACH. I AM THEREFORE YOUR BROTHER. I CAN'T MARRY YOU. I MUST RETURN.


THE BROKEN-HEARTED DEVAYANI CRIED OUT IN HER GRIEF.
YOU MADE USE OF ONE WHO WAS SINLESS IN HER DEVOTION TO YOU.


I THEREFORE LAY A CURSE ON YOU. YOU WILL NEVER BE ABLE TO USE THE CRAFT OF SANJIVANI.



THEN KACHA DEPARTED FOR THE ABODE OF INDRA, KING OF THE DEVAS.




SHUKRACHARYA GENTLY LED DEVAYANI AWAY.


WITH THE PASSAGE OF TIME, DEVAYANI COMPLETELY FORGOT ABOUT THE EXISTENCE OF KACHA.
MAY I JOIN SHARMISHTHA AND THE OTHERS AT THE POOL?
CERTAINLY! YOU MAY, MY CHILD! BUT BE CAREFUL.

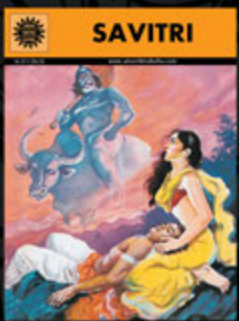

AND SHE LIVED HAPPILY WITH HER FATHER AND HER PLAYMATES IN THE CITY OF VRISHAPARVA, KING OF THE ASURAS.

EPICS &
MYTHOLOGY

KACHA AND DEVAYANI

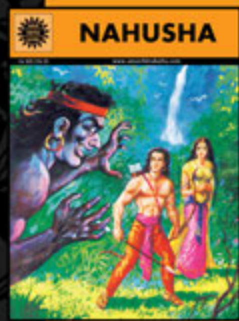
While the war was raging between the devas and asuras, the devas sent Kacha to the preceptor of the asuras. Kacha approached the asura guru as a student. It was in this background of hate, war and rivalry that the beautiful Devayani, the proud daughter, of the asura guru, fell in love with Kacha, the man who was being watched by the asuras with increasing suspicion – they knew Kacha was seeking the key to immortality from their guru. Then a twist in the tale throws the dreams of the young couple into disarray.

OTHER ACK EPICS & MYTHOLOGY:





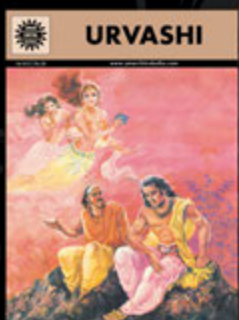




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